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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Letter dated 12 January 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am compelled to once again draw your attention to the critical situation in Occupied East Jerusalem as a result of the continuing illegal measures being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power. The Holy City remains the target of a deliberate, aggressive and illegal policy by the occupying Power to alter its demographic composition and its distinctly Palestinian Arab character and nature and to sever the city from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In grave breach of international law and in absolute disrespect for the calls of the international community, Israel continues and is intensifying its illegal attempts to consolidate its control over Occupied East Jerusalem and to artificially create an overwhelming Jewish majority in the city via the expulsion or forced displacement of the indigenous Palestinian population and the transfer of more Israeli settlers. The construction of settlements, the construction of the Wall, the eviction of Palestinian families, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the closure of Palestinian institutions and provocative actions in and near holy sites in Occupied East Jerusalem by the occupying Power continue unabated. All such actions are not only unlawful, but are highly inflammatory, threatening to further fuel existing sensitivities and to further destabilize the tense and fragile situation on the ground.

In this regard, I must refer to the ongoing Israeli practice of revoking the residency rights of Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem. For decades now, the occupying Power has been stripping Palestinian Jerusalemites of their identity cards, which ensure their residency in East Jerusalem, as part of a larger policy aimed at forcing out as many Palestinians as possible from the city and advancing its Judaization.

Reports have revealed that in the year 2008, Israel revoked the Jerusalem residency rights of nearly 5,000 Palestinians, forbidding them from living in the city that for thousands of them is the place of their birth. This figure represents the highest number of residency revocations in a one-year period since the occupation began in 1967. In this regard, records indicate that from the start of the occupation

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in 1967 until 2007, Israel revoked the residency rights of nearly 9,000 Palestinians, using a range of arbitrary pretexts and measures. The 2008 figure thus starkly illustrates and confirms the intensification and extent of Israel's colonization and de-population measures in East Jerusalem in recent years. Indeed, recent reports indicate that tens of thousands more Palestinian Jerusalemites are under threat of being stripped of their residency rights as Israel continues to pursue this illegal, reckless and dangerous policy to ethnically cleanse Occupied East Jerusalem of its indigenous population and to further entrench its illegal, de facto annexation of the city.

We have sent numerous letters alerting you to the critical situation in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a result of Israel's illegal colonization policies. We have repeatedly appealed to the international community to act to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The Council has repeatedly demanded the cessation of settlement activities and, in many resolutions, has specifically addressed Israel's colonization measures in Occupied East Jerusalem, calling for the immediate halt of all such measures and deeming the changes caused by these Israeli actions to be illegitimate, null and void. However, in spite of these resolutions and despite the firm calls, particularly in the recent period, by the international community for cessation of Israeli settlement activities, Israel continues to breach the law with impunity and has in fact intensified its colonization campaign. This is not only undermining the attempts to resume the peace process, but is directly endangering the prospects for and the physical viability of the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

Amidst grave concerns in this regard, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization has once again raised this issue to the highest level. The Palestinian leadership thus continues to consult all concerned parties with a view to drawing attention to and mobilizing action to urgently and collectively address this extremely serious matter. This is absolutely imperative for safeguarding the prospects for a peaceful settlement. We thus reiterate our call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to take action, including via practical measures, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to finally bring an end to its illegal colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to respect the rule of law and comply with its legal obligations, including the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant United Nations resolutions.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 354 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 6 January 2010 (A/ES-10/474-S/2010/13), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations